



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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Spring 2016
Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

NUEVA SECCIÓN, ¡EN ESPAÑOL! página 7

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Jackson Heights: Why We’re Different

By Len Maniace

What makes Jackson Heights special? There are two obvious things: Jackson Heights is an especially diverse neighborhood in one of the world’s most diverse cities. Then there’s the architecture and green spaces that surround our buildings, a combination so unusual that much of the neighborhood is designated as a city landmark district.

Those are important, but I think there’s another, less obvious reason. Ever since my wife Barbara and I moved here many years ago, it’s been clear to us that this is a place of people who want to participate in the life of our community. And it’s a community that’s receptive to those people who want to participate.

JHBG, our organization, has been a big beneficiary of these joiners, and it’s been our goal to be receptive to those who want to contribute. These joiners are responsible for our initial success and the growth of our organization.

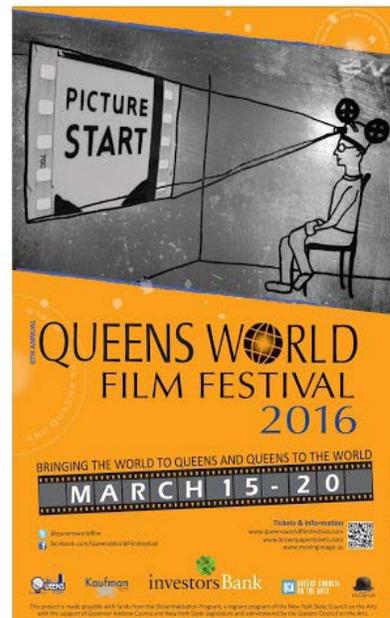
We started 28 years ago as a civic nonprofit group battling graffiti, advocating for a landmark district, cleaning up Travers Park and started hosting the Halloween Parade. Later, volunteers added environmental sustainability programs, including composting, open-space advocacy, street-tree plantings and care, and bringing the Greenmarket to JH. We’ve added arts offerings such as the annual Children’s Art Contest, Summer Sundays in the Park and the Jackson Heights Orchestra.

(cont. p. 2)

The Queens World Film Festival

By Katha Cato

On March 15, the Sixth Annual Queens World Film Festival will kick off its full week of indie cinema and special events with a reception and opening night at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, sponsored by Investors Bank and catered by Station LIC. The following day, March 16, QWFF will continue at MoMI and P.S. 69 in Jackson Heights, the Secret Theatre in Long Island City, and the All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Sunnyside.



With over 10,000 film festivals around the world, when a submission comes in from Nepal or Glasgow or Jackson Heights, the decision to submit to the QWFF is something the Festival is proud of. It is a sign of confidence in the festival, and ultimately a sign of confidence that the community is interested in indie films and will support the screenings.

The Festival is programmed in thematic blocks, with provocative names that pair complimentary films together to create a cinematic experience you cannot get at any other festival in the world. With four venues running for six days, the Festival believes that there is something for everyone. However, there are a few highlights at P.S. 69 that are worth an extra look.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

(cont. from cover)

While we are probably the biggest community organization in Jackson Heights, we are hardly alone. There’s the Jackson Heights Art Club and the St. Joan of Arc Youth Council, two organizations that preceded the formation of JHBG, which offer wonderful programs that have benefitted my family.

The list goes on, including the Lion’s Share Food Pantry, which assists the needy; the Jackson Heights Green Alliance, an open-space group; and more recent additions like the Jackson Heights Community Chorus and Hibridos Collective; and Friends of Diversity Plaza, which advocates on behalf of a pedestrian plaza on 37th Road, and of which JHBG is a member.

Such organizations occupy a crucial space in Jackson Heights and wherever else they exist, creating bonds among people and humanizing places in ways that are outside the scopes of government or businesses and beyond the ability of individuals.

Though civic, youth and arts groups are familiar to us now, they were pretty much an American invention. Visiting the United States in the early 19th century, French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that Americans had talent for creating associations to address professional, social, civic and political needs, and that they were an important extension of democracy.

All of the above is perhaps a long way of saying we hope you will join us. The return of spring means the revival of many JHBG activities that were dormant over the winter. We need your help to continue to make Jackson Heights a standout community.

Read through *Views from the Heights* and look at the *JHBG Gets It Done* poster near the back this newsletter to get a better idea of what we do. You can contact us at volunteer@jhb.org. Remember, you and your neighbors have gotten us this far.



JHBG’s Upcoming Tree Stewardship Event

Sat., March 19, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

We will meet at JH-SCRAPS, located on 69th St., just off of 35th Ave, along the rails adjacent to the BQE, for tree care, weeding, litter clean up, mulch spreading and bulb planting. Staff from the Parks Department will be on hand to help, so please join us for some outdoor gardening fun in anticipation of the coming spring!

RSVP to Melissa Zavala at zavamelissa76@gmail.com.

JHBG’s Upcoming Gardening Planning Event

Sat., March 26, 10 a.m. to noon

JHBG’s annual gardening planning breakfast is here! Once again Board Member Nuala O’Doherty is opening her home for camaraderie and gardening ideas. Come with ideas of what you’d like to see made beautified in the neighborhood. If you are with a group, come with specific Saturdays you’d like to work.

RSVP to Nuala O’Doherty at FODoherty@aol.com for location.

Editor's Take

By Lila M. Stromer

Welcome to this issue of *Views from the Heights*.

This small newspaper always deals with all things Jackson Heights. But this particular issue is all about the old and new of Jackson Heights.

Len Maniace's *President's Message* (see the cover) is all about the long established and recently established organizations that make Jackson Heights what it is, whether it be a greening organization or a music organization. All of them help make Jackson Heights a better, prettier and more communal neighborhood.

Of course, one of the organizations that's putting Jackson Heights on the map is the Queens World Film Festival (see the story on the cover by Katha Cato, one of the founders of the Festival). In just a few short years, this festival has attracted hundreds of filmmakers and audiences to Jackson Heights. It is growing so well now that the QWFF has offerings in three other nearby neighborhoods: Astoria, Long Island City and Sunnyside. The QWFF is making many parts of Queens important destination stops.

Not to toot our own horn—okay, maybe a little bit!—JHBG took a peek over our shoulder at what was accomplished in 2015 (*JHBG by the Numbers*, p. 4), both as a way to wrap up last year and to look forward with projects for this year. Those of us lucky enough to have lived in Jackson Heights in 2015 had a lot of entertainment (multiple Jackson Heights Orchestra [JHO] concerts and nine Sundays of music at Travers Park, to name just a few of the music happenings); fun days with the summertime Historic Weekend, the 26th Annual Halloween Parade and the December sing-along in front of the post office to start off the holidays; and plenty of greening opportunities, from composting to planting to mulching to counting trees (see Melissa Zavala's story on the tree census on p. 6).

With all that was accomplished in 2015, JHBG's plans for 2016 are just as big. Of course there'll be the annual events again, and plenty of days of watering the neighborhood street trees and planting bulbs. JHBG would love to have your help with one, two or more projects. For example, on page 2 there are already two opportunities to help make Jackson Heights a prettier and greener place to live. On March 19 there's a tree stewardship event, and on March 26 there's a chance to mingle and share ideas on gardening around Jackson Heights throughout the summer. And the first JHO concert of the year is on March 16; read all about it on page 8!



To see other events, check out the Calendar of Events on page 5.

To get back to the “old”—in this case the history of Jackson Heights—Barbara Lombardo interviewed long-time resident Betty Morris, who has lived in Jackson Heights for more than 90 years. It is a real treasure to have someone in the community who can show us how far this once little and pastoral neighborhood has changed over time. To get a glimpse of life back then, check out Barbara's interview on page 9.

And to get back to the new—in this case a new section on page 7—JHBG is reaching out to Spanish-speaking neighbors by offering a summary of the important articles in this newspaper. We are hoping to grow this outreach throughout 2016. If you have any suggestions on how we can best do this, please let me know at views@jhb.org.

For a combo of old and new, there's a new grassroots organization, The Radical Age Movement, that was launched a year ago to combat the challenges of the traditional notions of aging. Its founder, Alice Fisher, tells all about the organization and the reason for creating it on page 10.

There are more stories of the old and new in Jackson Heights. Something that Jackson Heights has been battling for a long time is the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), a pestilent critter that has destroyed thousands of trees across the boroughs and Long Island. See Marc Donnelly's article on page 11 to find out what to do if you see an ALB and how to prevent its spread. Jackson Heights is still considered under quarantine. On a new note (and a nicer subject), the Queens Bike Initiative is a new group that is spreading the word about safe biking and looking to create more bike routes (see p. 12). For new news on an old subject, the landmarking of Fairway Hall, on the docket of the Landmarks Commission since 1990, was recently removed from that list (for the original article, see the November issue; for the latest article, see p. 13).

I want to end on a note about the new, and a yummy one at that! See Victoria Steinberg's article on page 8 about some of the new restaurants opening in Jackson Heights. We are an ever-changing community, and this is just one sign of that growth.

Until next time...

JHBG by the Numbers

By Lila M. Stromer

JHBG was busy in 2015, so we decided to tally the numbers and share what we've accomplished.

The Jackson Heights Beautification Group is an all-volunteer organization, from the board members to the people who help with every event.

JHBG is deeply grateful for every volunteer who has helped! Of course, all of this work costs money, from buying or building tree guards, to printing the quarterly newspaper, to buying the tools needed to plant bulbs, to the stamps for letters sent to agencies, and more.

The following list can't include what's not countable, such as the time and energy spent in front of agencies and political leaders making sure that the Historic District remains historic; the manpower to run JH-SCRAPS, the organization's composting center; or the street tree care along parts of 35th Ave. and 37th Ave.

2015 BY THE NUMBERS

OUTDOOR PROJECTS

Tree Guards (installed to protect street trees):

45 wood tree guards and 7 steel tree guards

Gardening:

Gardens maintained: 7 gardens (Food Bazaar, P.S. 69, P.S. 89, P.S. 149, P.S. 280, Leverich Cemetery, and 69th St. between 35th Ave. and 37th Ave.)

Bulbs planted: 4,000 tulip bulbs and 5,000 daffodil bulbs

TreesCount 2015 (decennial tree census of NYC

Parks):

3,172 trees counted within the 11372 zip code (additional trees counted in East Elmhurst)

101 volunteers for 12 tree census events

Post Office Benches: refinished and repainted

JH-SCRAPS

4,855 pounds of scraps collected (January–November)

48 bags of leaves collected this fall (approx. 700 pounds)

COMMUNICATIONS

E-newsletters: 12 (monthly)

Print copies of *Views from the Heights*: 4 (quarterly)

Delivered to stores along 37th Ave. (75th St. to 90th St.), Northern Blvd., and elected officials—on average, 850–950 copies are hand-delivered by five people

Additional copies: 3,200 copies printed for the Halloween trick-or-treat bags, and 300 printed for Historic Weekend

EVENTS

Concerts (sponsored):

Summer Sundays: 9

Make Music New York: 1

Jackson Heights Orchestra (JHO): 9

Volunteer Musicians: 35

Audience Reached: More than 1,000 attendees

Historic Weekend (June):

Over 350 tickets sold for the Garden & Walking tours

Over 100 people attended the two lectures

Good Neighbor Awards Dinner (September):

200 attendees

17 donor vendors

15 winners

1 jazz band

Children's Halloween Parade (October):

3,200 Halloween treat bags distributed

17 marching groups

30 merchant/organization donors

70 trick-or-treat bag stuffers

25 trick-or-treat bag distributors

1,500 balloons

4,000 spectators

Holiday Lighting Ceremony (December):

78 Singers

5 gallons (164 cups) of hot chocolate served

Singers included: Daisy Girl Scouts Troop, P.S. 69, 82nd

Street Academics, and the Jackson Heights Choral Group

Graphic Design

2 posters (Good Neighbor Awards and Halloween)

ORGANIZATION:

History:

27 years of continuous operation

Membership:

200 paid members

JHCREW Members (Jackson Heights Canine Recreation Entertainment Wonderland / "Dog Run"):

58 members

JHBG GOVERNANCE:

- 16 Board Members
- 6 Officers
- 9 Executive Committee Members
- 13 Committees
- 10 regularly scheduled board meetings per year

JHBG PLANS FOR 2016

JHBG has a lot of tentative plans for 2016!

These include, among other things: updating its website; hosting events such as another Good Neighbor Awards Dinner, Annual Halloween Parade, Historic Weekend and the Holiday Lighting Ceremony; caring for the street trees throughout the summer; supporting the JHO; gardening throughout Jackson Heights; renovation of the Post Office garden with plantings in bloom for three seasons; the installation of additional street-tree guards on 37th Ave.;

a perennial flower planting program for street trees along 37th Ave.; sponsoring Make Music New York and Summer Sundays in the Park; continuing to protect the Historic District by working with various city departments; and continuing to bring information to our neighbors through the JHBG e-newsletter (sent to paid members) and this newspaper (delivered to members' homes so they never miss a copy).

If you'd like to volunteer, please let us know at volunteer@jhb.org. If you'd like to make an ever-needed donation, please turn to page 15 or go to www.jhb.org/about/memberships to find the donation form. Either way, we thank you!

Calendar of Events: Spring 2016

JHBG invites your participation in the following events. Stay the entire time, part of the time, offer your expertise, or learn something new! JHBG provides the tools, and volunteers of all ages are always welcome. **Watch our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/JHBGNY) or our website (www.JHBG.org) for times, locations and any changes to the following.** We hope to see you out there! To volunteer, contact us at volunteer@jhb.org.

JH-SCRAPS is open year-round

Every Saturday bring your scraps to JH-SCRAPS, 69th St. and 35th Ave. between 11 a.m.–1 p.m. JH-SCRAPS is JHBG's composting location. For info on what is compostable, write to jhscraps@jhb.org.

March

- **March 15–20:** Queens World Film Festival. See the article on the front page of this issue.
- **Wed., March 16, 7:30 p.m.:** JHO Concert at St. Mark's Church, 33-50 82nd St. The concert is free with a suggested donation of \$10 (\$5 for seniors and students). A donation of a nonperishable food item for Lion's Share Food Pantry, run by St. Mark's, is deeply appreciated.
- **Sat., March 19, 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.:** JHBG Tree Stewardship Event. See the Box on page 2 of this issue for details.
- **Sat., March 26, 10 a.m.–noon:** JHBG annual gardening planning breakfast. See the Box on page 2.

April

- **Sat., April 30:** Queens Consort concert. English baroque music concert, St. Mark's Church, 7 p.m. Tickets (\$15/\$10) sold at the door, and festive reception to follow. For more information, go www.queensconsort.com.
- **Every Sat., from 10 a.m.-noon:** Gardening projects around Jackson Heights.

Future

- **May 18:** JHO Concert.
- **June 11 and 12:** Historic Weekend.
- **June 21:** Make Music New York, Diversity Plaza.
- **Sundays, July and August:** Summer Sundays in the Park Concerts.

An Early Glimpse of 2015 Tree Census Data

By Melissa Zavala

In previous issues of *Views from the Heights*, I have been reporting on the progress made on the city's third decennial tree census. While counting has slowed during the winter months, some preliminary results are starting to be made public by New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation. The Parks Department is currently developing an interactive Web page offering the public access to the data collected so far in a variety of scales, ranging from details on individual trees, to overall snapshots of entire neighborhoods. While only Manhattan, Staten Island and the Bronx are complete, the available data is already yielding useful details on our urban canopy. Brooklyn was 79 percent and Queens 60 percent complete at the time of this writing. So what are some of the preliminary findings revealing about Jackson Heights?

The most common species found in our neighborhood is the littleleaf linden (*Tilia cordata*), with 217 trees. This is an ornamental flowering tree with richly scented yellowish flowers blooming in clusters that hang down on a long stalk in early summer. Their flowers bear a nut-like fruit and their leaves are distinctly heart shaped with toothed edges. These are only some of the identifying features of the *Tilia* genus. This species is common throughout some European countries, central Russia, the western-most parts of Asia and can be found in high altitudes in warmer climates throughout parts of the Mediterranean. While counting some of the different lindens (for example, silver leaf lindens and American lindens found across the city), one of the helpful Parks TreesCount! staffers told us how her Eastern European grandmother often made linden tea for a variety of ailments. Tea made from the flowers of the linden tree can help with some digestive problems and have anti-inflammatory properties, making it a traditional herbal remedy for various respiratory ailments, among other conditions.

More than just counting the most common species of trees in Jackson Heights, the Parks Department has already begun assessing the ecosystem services provided by street trees in our area. The following are the statistics they have gathered so far:

- Storm water intercepted each year and its calculated monetary value in terms of savings: 2,852,469 gallons with a value of \$28,239.43

- Energy conserved each year: 1,680,590 kWh. valued at \$212,165.87
- Air pollutants removed each year: 3,221 pounds with savings of \$16,842.58
- Carbon dioxide reduced each year: 3,430,882 pounds valued at \$11,459.14
- Total value of benefits: \$280,166.08

While two of the main complaints heard while counting was that trees are a lot of work and cost homeowners money, given the hours of raking leaves and sidewalk repairs some find irritating, it is clear that the value of trees is significant in terms of monetary benefits as well as aesthetic and psychological ones, and more!

If you are interested in helping the Parks Department complete the census in our area (although the 11372 zip code was completed this summer, north of Northern Boulevard is now being counted), there will be upcoming opportunities to do so. Stay tuned for future announcements of events on JHBG's website and Facebook page! JHBG will also be conducting tree care work along 37th Ave. in the coming weeks, if you wish to become involved in helping the trees in Jackson Heights survive and thrive. After last summer's drought and this year's erratic winter, the neighborhood trees could use the help! Write to volunteer@jhb.org if you want to find ways of helping out.



Measuring circumference of a tree

FESTIVAL DE CINE MUNDIAL DE QUEENS

Por Katha Cato

El 15 de marzo el Sexto Festival Anual de Cine Mundial de Queens arrancará su semana llena de cine independiente y eventos especiales con una recepción y noche de inauguración en el Museum of the Moving Image en Astoria. El siguiente día, 16 de marzo, el QWFF continuará en el MoMI y en P.S. 69 en Jackson Heights, en el Secret Theatre en Long Island City y en la Iglesia Episcopal All Saints en Sunnyside. Para más información visite la página www.queensworldfilmfestival.com.

¡CONCIERTO DE JHO EL 16 DE MARZO!

Por Pat Glunt

La Orquesta de Jackson Heights opera bajo organización de JHBG y se dedica a presentar el talento local, así como a explorar y acoger la diversidad de Jackson Heights. La JHO tiene programados dos conciertos: uno para el miércoles 16 de marzo y otro para el 18 de mayo; ambos tendrán lugar en la iglesia Episcopal de San Mark (localizada en la calle 82 esquina con la avenida 34) a las 7:30 p.m. La entrada es gratuita pero se recomienda una donación de \$10 y \$5 para personas de la tercera edad y estudiantes.

PRESENTACIÓN DEL MOVIMIENTO RADICAL AGE

Por Alice Fisher, fundadora de M.A., M. S. W.

El Movimiento “Radical Age”, lanzado por Alice Fisher hace un año, es un esfuerzo común a nivel nacional para retar las nociones tradicionales de lo que significa envejecer. La meta de esta organización es construir un movimiento intergeneracional dedicado a enfrentar y erradicar la discriminación debida a la edad y su impacto en los adultos mayores. Para apoyar y unirse al movimiento visite la página www.theradicalagemovement.com o envíe un correo electrónico a confrontingageism@gmail.com.

ESCARABAJOS LONGICORNIOS ASIÁTICOS: ESTÉ ALERTA

Por Marc Donnelly

Nativo de China, Japón y Corea, el escarabajo longicornio asiático (ALB) mide entre 1 y 1.5 pulgadas de largo, su cuerpo es negro brillante, tiene cerca de veinte puntos blancos sobre cada ala y un par de antenas largas con franjas blancas y negras. Desde que fuera encontrado en Brooklyn en 1996 un total de 4 158 árboles infectados y 1 050 en alto riesgo se han removido de Brooklyn y Queens, ahora áreas en cuarentena. Se recomienda no mover troncos, leña u otros desechos de madera de las áreas en cuarentena y contactar al programa ALB para obtener más información sobre la forma apropiada de eliminar esos desechos. Si encuentra algún ALB captúrelo, si es posible, póngalo en un frasco y congélelo para que sea identificado, o tome una foto del insecto y del daño en los árboles y llame al (866) 702-9938, (866) 265-0301 o (877) STOP-ALB.

UNA RUTA VERDE PARA CONECTAR LOS PARQUES DE QUEENS

Por Queens Bike Initiative

El verano pasado residentes de Jackson Heights unieron esfuerzos para crear la Queens Bike Initiative con un objetivo simple: conectar los pequeños parques de Jackson Heights, Elmhurst y East Elmhurst con parques más grandes en Astoria, Flushing y Corona. Los residentes de todas las edades pueden inscribirse en www.qnsbike.com o enviar un correo electrónico a qnsbike@gmail.com para participar como voluntarios o recibir información sobre los próximos recorridos y las últimas noticias del grupo.

JHO Concert on March 16!

By Pat Glunt

The Jackson Heights Orchestra is getting ready for its upcoming concert. The concert, scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, will take place at St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free but there is a suggested donation of \$10 and \$5 for seniors and students. Please note that a donation of a nonperishable food item, to be donated to the Lion's Share Food Pantry, run by St. Mark's, is deeply appreciated.

The program covers a wide variety of works. There is the offering to St. Patrick's Day with a piece by the not-so-famous Irish composer Charles Stanford; a new work by orchestra member and composer Joseph Bartolozzi will be premiered; and the more famous Hindemith's Concerto for Horn will be played by Barbara Oldham. Ms. Oldham is a founding member of the Quintet of the Americas, a group that has been performing in Jackson Heights for many years. The concert will close with Schubert's "Tragic" Symphony. There will be a reception at the church immediately following the concert to which all are invited.

Mark your calendar for the next concert, too, which will be on May 18, also at St. Mark's at 7:30 p.m. Jazz flutist and bari-saxophonist Carol Sudhalter will be the guest soloist. Jessica Ramos will be taking the baton to lead the orchestra for one selection. This opportunity was raffled off at the JHBG Good Neighbor Awards dinner last September, and Ms. Ramos was the lucky ticket holder. Afzal Hossain was the winner two years ago, and those of you who attended that concert will remember how much fun everyone had! The May 18 concert will be a collection of light classics and cool jazz.

The JHO operates under the banner of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group and is dedicated to showcasing local talent and exploring and embracing the diversity of Queens. The March 16 concert is also made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and administrated by the Queens Council on the Arts.

St. Mark's is located on 82nd St. and 34th Ave. It is easily accessible by subway and bus. For more information on the featured artists, go to quintet.org, jbartolozzi.com and sudhalter.com.

Diverse Menu on Tap for Spring Restaurant Openings

By Victoria Steinberg

With two new bistros and a seafood restaurant slated to open within the next few months, the colorful Jackson Heights dining scene is set to gain an even more varied flavor.

Swim Two Birds, located at 76-05 37th Ave., a 43-seat restaurant originally slated to open last fall, appears set for a spring debut. Featuring the creations of chef/owner Stewart Wadden, a French-trained Canadian, the new spot promises contemporary American dining.

By June, another self-styled American bistro, The Queensboro, is slated to further widen dining options when it opens at 80-02 Northern Blvd.

Adding new spice to the neighborhood, Oceanic Boil, promising Asian-influenced, Cajun-spiced seafood, is scheduled to make its bow within the next few months. Owned by a seafood distributor with an Asian background, and located on 37th Ave. between 84th and 85th Sts., this distinctive new entry plans to emphasize Louisiana shellfish.

Also set to join the scene are Mezban Restaurant & Party Hall, on 37th Ave. at 75th St., as well as Nandoss, at 72-11 Roosevelt Ave., a banquet hall and event space specializing in South Asian cuisine with Asian fusion, Italian, Mexican and Southern options, all alcohol-free. Both spaces were under construction at press time, but no further details about either were available.

In addition, two neighborhood favorites currently closed for renovation, Espresso 77, at 35-57 77th St., and Pizza Boy, at 74-04 37th Ave., are set to reopen by the summer.

Finally, the acclaimed neighborhood favorite, Zabb Elee, on Roosevelt and 72nd St., sold its space so that the owner can concentrate on a new East Village location. It is expected to reopen under new ownership sometime in March.

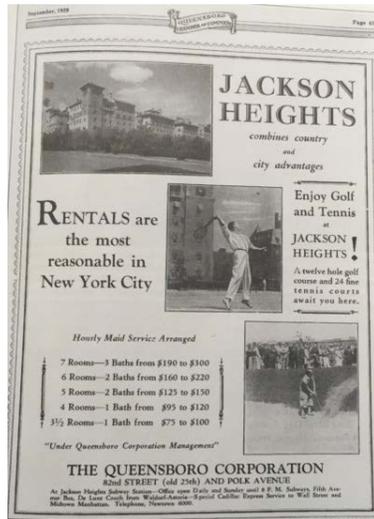


The Living History of Jackson Heights

By Barbara Lombardo

As wide and varied as Jackson Heights is, so too are the voices of its residents, both life-long and new.

One such long-time resident has lived in Jackson Heights since the 1920s (and is an active member of JHBG): Betty Morris.



Ad by Queensboro Corp.

I had the opportunity to interview Betty to find out about a Jackson Heights that has changed over more than 90 years. It is rare for a community to be able to find out its history through the traditional form of storytelling. Jackson Heights is one such fortunate community.

The eldest of four siblings, Betty grew up in Jackson Heights after her parents decided that the peaceful lifestyle was a better alternative to the bustle of Manhattan living (see the advertisement). Betty's father was a medical doctor, and he moved with his wife to one of the first houses built on 87th St. off 37th Ave., when the Queensboro Corporation transformed open fields into a planned garden community.

In the mid-1920s, the family won best prize in a Baby Parade. The photo appeared in the *New York Times*. Young Betty attended St. Joan of Arc School, and matriculated from the Garden School High School.



New York Times photo

Although the Jackson Heights of today is known for its many restaurants and eateries, Betty remembers that “everyone entertained in those days and it was very elegant. There was no going out to eat but people did fuss over food and dinners.”

Betty was always a very active person. Growing up, she played tennis on local courts, attended dance classes and ran in the now long-gone open green spaces. An active swimmer, a photo of Betty in flight during summer camp in Pennsylvania captures her spirit.



Another memory is the Jimmy Ormonde Dancing School. “He was quite well known and a very good teacher.” The school was located near 90th St., off the 7 train. The following photo is of Betty's sister, Edna, from a recital performance, probably in the 1930s.



In Betty's young adulthood she moved to one of the original co-op buildings in Jackson Heights, and spent her career at both *Life* and

Fortune magazines. Like current residents, she happily took advantage of the close proximity to everything New York City has to offer. Betty's fondest memories are also of her travels throughout the world. One particular trip she remembered clearly was down the Nile River in fall 1963. When she arrived in Cairo, people were crying. That was how she learned President Kennedy had been shot.

Protecting the greenery and trees has always been a priority for Betty. Her first step in advocacy was during Mayor John Lindsay's administration (1966–1973). The trees in the neighborhood were badly neglected and in need of pruning and care. She wrote a series of letters to Lindsay, and eventually even corresponded with the parks commissioner at that time, August Heckscher. After many letters, the city finally gave necessary attention to the trees.

Betty has loved Jackson Heights from the early days to the present. She has swept the park, removed garbage from tree pits and cleaned graffiti. According to Betty, who has cared about and for Jackson Heights her whole life, JHBG is “doing just the right thing”: making the community a better place to live.

[Ed: The ad is from the September 1929 issue of Queensborough Magazine; reprinted with permission from the Queens Chamber of Commerce. NYT photo is Betty's personal possession.]

Introducing The Radical Age Movement

By Alice Fisher, M.A., M.S.W., Founder

You're rushing to make the 7 train and the older woman in front of you takes the stairs one at a time. Your dad asks you to help him with his computer ... you know, the one you bought for him last Father's Day.

The old couple standing next to you in line at the bank are ragged and not smelling too good. After driving Aunt Shirley home from the restaurant, she calls you to tell you she can't find her purse ... again. You are amazed that she could find the phone.

How do you honestly react to these scenarios? If you're like most people, you sigh, walk away, get exasperated or think to yourself, "That will never be me. I am not going to get old like that." Yet, you know that if you're lucky, you will. We celebrate longevity while we stigmatize old age. Everyone wants to live a long life, but nobody wants to grow old. When did "old" become a nasty word? We've grown up in a youth-obsessed culture, so it's likely that even the best of us has some ageist tendencies. With ageism rampant in America, how could we not? Like racism or sexism or any other *ism*, ageism is the systemic cause of most problems that older and elder adults face in this country.



The Radical Age Movement was launched a year ago by Alice Fisher, M.S.W. This is a national grassroots effort that challenges traditional notions of aging. The goal of the organization is to build an intergenerational movement dedicated to confronting and eradicating age discrimination and its impact on older adults in all areas of cultural, professional and community life.

While working in the Office of NYS Senator Liz Krueger, Alice began developing The Radical Age Movement with the senator's blessings. One of the hats she wore in Krueger's office was to serve as government liaison to the older adults in the district. Every day Alice saw people who had worked hard their entire lives only to find themselves being harassed by unscrupulous landlords, not receiving the healthcare that they deserved and needed and finding themselves with no social support system.

Maybe they had no children, or were estranged from their children, or their friends had all passed away or they were trying to make life work in NYC with Social Security as their sole income. Some suffered financial abuse, mostly at the hands of relatives, while others wandered the streets in different stages of dementia. The lunch at their local senior center may have been their only daily meal. We are all living in a country with no long-term care system.

"We are living longer," Alice points out, "and those extra years are not tacked on to the end of our lives. For people who are relatively healthy, this means that 65 is no longer the number that signifies it's time to close up shop. Who is prepared to be retired for 30 or 40 years? Nobody knows what to call this cohort; they are leading-edge boomers, young seniors or whatever euphemism comes to mind. What they are not is "old" if old is what our parents and grandparents were in their sixties and seventies," she concluded.

As a social worker and community organizer, Alice could not keep from asking herself, "Why?" Why were all these older community members dealing with so many problems? The more she listened and attempted to help, the more she came to realize that it was ageism. Not unlike racism or sexism, ageism—discrimination against the aging—is not only the last *ism* to be conquered, but it is also a prejudice that everyone who lives a long life will face. When somebody is ageist, they are guilty of holding a prejudice against their future selves.

Alice invites you, your friends and all neighbors in Jackson Heights to help confront ageism by joining The Radical Age Movement. You can do that on their website (www.theradicalagemovement.com) or by e-mailing confrontingageism@gmail.com. Nobody is too young or too old to join The Radical Age Movement.

*In the 60s we raised our voices against Sexism
in support of the Women's Movement.
In the 60s we raised our voices against the Vietnam War
in support of the Student Movement.
They called us Radicals because we supported Radical
Change.
Today, many of us are in our 60s
and it's time for us to raise those same voices against
AGEISM
and support The Radical Age Movement!*

Asian Longhorned Beetles: Be On the Lookout

By Marc Donnelly

The trees of Jackson Heights, one of its most precious items, has been dealing with a fairly new adversary since the mid-1990s. Common enemies such as storms, hurricanes, droughts, car drivers, construction and old age would be enough for any tree to handle, but a small culprit has been doing some major damage of its own. Back in 1996, a wily traveler, the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) was found in Brooklyn. A native of China, Japan and Korea, the ALB apparently hitched a ride on wood pallets used in shipping products from Asia, and upon arriving on U.S. shores, they chewed holes and laid their eggs under the bark of many hardwood trees, most commonly maple as well as willow, elm, birch, ash, and poplar, among others. They have been a parasite to trees since their first landing.

When these beetle eggs hatch, the larvae bore their way into the trees to feed on the trees' heartwood, forming tunnels in the trunks and branches that disrupt nutrient transportation and ultimately kill the trees. Once the larvae become adults, they chew their way out of the tree, leaving the telltale sign of dime-sized holes and a mixture of waste and tree material called frass, starting the process all over again. The ALB moved across the boroughs on logs and firewood, reaching Queens (and hence Jackson Heights), as well as Manhattan, Staten Island and Long Island. Separate invasions reached Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio and Massachusetts. Once they were discovered in NYC, city, state and federal agencies sent out their troops.

ALBs are approximately 1 to 1.5 inches long, with shiny black bodies and about twenty white spots on each wing. An easy characteristic to spot is their long black and white banded antennae. Adults have six legs, with the upper part being whitish-blue. The beetles can fly but only for short distances.

After the beetles were found, the United States Department of Agriculture and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYS Ag & Markets) carefully surveyed places of sightings and created areas of quarantine, and infested trees were removed. Since the original sighting in Brooklyn in 1996, a total of 4,158 infested and 1,050 high-risk trees have been removed from the Brooklyn and Queens quarantined areas.

This loss does not include other areas in NYC and Long Island. The quarantines on Staten Island and Manhattan

were lifted in 2013, after receiving three consecutive yearly inspections that found no ALBs.

Jackson Heights is still considered a quarantined area. You can help by allowing program officials access to your property to survey and remove infested trees. Inspections by the USDA and NYS Ag & Markets include trees on both public and private land.

If you or a neighbor receive an ominous-looking flyer asking to be on the lookout for this scourge, do not be alarmed, but be diligent. If you see something, say something!

It is also important NOT to remove logs, firewood or other wood debris from a quarantined area. According to the USDA Web page, "if you need to move woody material such as stumps, logs, brush and twigs, please contact your ALB program office or municipality for information on proper yard waste disposal." Infected wood debris needs to be put through a chipper to prevent the spread of the beetle.

If possible, capture the insect, place it in a jar, and freeze it for identification. Or take a digital picture of the insect and the damage to your trees. Please then call (866) 702-9938, (866) 265-0301 or (877) STOP-ALB.

To read more about the ALB, check out the USDA's site at www.asianlonghornedbeetle.com or their Facebook page, facebook.com/asianlonghornbeetle.

Finally, a Parks Department official, in an e-mail, confirmed that the ALB quarantine covers a large part of Queens, and that USDA and NYS Ag & Markets conduct inspections on host species. When there are enough years of clean inspections, quarantines are lifted, as has happened on Staten Island and Manhattan. However, inspections have to be thorough. So, if you receive a door tag, as the editor of this newspaper did, please don't just throw it away, but call the number on it for an inspection.

The trees of Jackson Heights will thank you!



A Green Way Connecting Parks in Queens

By Queens Bike Initiative

Jackson Heights has few public green spaces, but its central location means that some parks throughout Queens are a short bike ride away. Last summer a group of Jackson Heights residents joined forces to create the Queens Bike Initiative to work toward a simple goal: connect the small parks in Jackson Heights, Elmhurst and East Elmhurst to larger parks in Astoria, Flushing and Corona.

Travers Park is less than two miles from Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and less than three miles from Astoria Park and Socrates Park. It can be inconvenient to reach these parks by subway or on foot, but the short distance and flat ride make it easy to get there by bike. However, the routes need to be made safer.

Yi-Ling Tan, one of the group's organizers, points out that bike lanes could serve as connectors not just to parks, but also to other neighborhoods: "They go where the subway and buses may not go. Oftentimes they reduce transit time. It's also a fun and healthy way to get around."

Biking has no carbon footprint and requires minimal investment in infrastructure. In comparison to mass transit options, it can cut travel time in half between many Queens neighborhoods.

"I feel strongly that Queens must meet the needs of its families to get around safely by bike," said Laura Newman, a mother of two and a founding member of Make Queens Safer, who also volunteers for the Initiative. "Ample networks of bike lanes serve New Yorkers so well in other parts of the city. Queens residents deserve this life-enrichment infrastructure as well."

So far more than 2,500 people have signed a version of the print or Web petition the Queens Bike Initiative created to move bike safety forward. The vast majority of signatories are from Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Corona, Elmhurst, Woodside, Astoria and Flushing.

"The initiative is composed of western Queens residents. Members of our group use bikes for recreation, work or just getting around," said James McIntyre, another of the group's organizers. "We believe bikes should be an integral part of any conversation concerning a balanced transportation plan for our borough."

Many in the group are parents who not only want to make biking safe for their families, but who also drive cars. "My son and I had started riding bikes, and the idea of a

protected bike lane to another park sounded like a dream come true," said Alexia Tate, another volunteer. "Bike lanes are important for the same reason crosswalks and traffic lane markers are important. The best way to keep everyone safe is through acknowledging everyone who uses the road and giving them space," she added.

The group envisions a bike lane grid that is well signaled, thoughtfully laid out and physically protected wherever possible to enable use even by children and senior cyclists who do not bike around the borough due to safety concerns. The Initiative supports adherence to traffic rules and is working to spread safe and cordial etiquette among *all* cyclists.

Since summer 2015, the Initiative has reached out to political leadership, neighborhood associations and civic groups. They've also launched a series of bike rides, including several food tours promoting local businesses, and a Santa-inspired ride that attracted dozens of families.

"One of the boys who was in our ride went to a mall the following weekend and told the Santa there: 'You are not Santa Claus! The real Santa rode a bicycle with me last Sunday,'" said Claudia Corcino, who organized the Christmas ride.

Plans for 2016 include a bike-riding boot camp especially designed to empower women; more food and neighborhood rides; another Santa Ride; and educational initiatives targeting delivery workers, children and park-goers.

Residents from all ages can access the Queens Bike Initiative's mailing list by visiting www.qns.bike or e-mailing qnsbike@gmail.com to be notified of upcoming rides, receive updates from the group or to volunteer. Except for the food tours, all of the group's rides are free and open to everyone.



Rider during the Santa Ride

The Queens World Film Festival

(cont. from cover)

March 16: Dinner at Armondo's and a movie! Dinner is at 6:00 p.m. at Armondo's and the screening is at 8:00 p.m. at P.S. 69 for a block of films called "Tales of Connectedness," including *Tom in America*, which is a touching older love story starring the legendary Sally Kirkland and Burt Young. For dinner reservations, call 718-898-0113 for one of the 50 seats for this event. Tickets to only the screening are, of course, available.

March 17: *Julio of Jackson Heights* is Richard Shpuntoff's personal documentary about the 1990 murder in Jackson Heights that many say opened up a highly closeted community, paving the way for gay rights and marriage equality. The film is at P.S. 69 at 8:00 p.m.

March 19: *Mind/Game: The Unquiet Journey of Chamiqua Holdsclaw* is by two-time Academy Award Nominated Director Rick Goldsmith, about the Queens-based athlete who was poised for greatness when the stigma of mental illness derailed her brilliant career. The film is at P.S. 69 at 10:30 a.m.

March 20: "Family Friendly" (the entire block is rated PG-13) offers unique slices of life from Argentina, Australia, Germany, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. The block is at P.S. 69 at 12:30 p.m.

This doesn't even touch on this year's "Spirit of Queens" Award Honoree Melvin Van Peebles, a multi-talented actor, director, screenwriter, composer (and more; check out his biography on IMBd) or the Festival's IndieCollect tribute featuring the film *Smithereens* and a conversation with Susan Seideman (who also directed *Desperately Seeking Susan*; again, check out her bio on IMBd) or the short film from Germany, *Alles Wird Gut (Everything Will Be Okay)* that was nominated for an Oscar this year. The best thing to do is go to www.queensworldfilmfestival.com to find out more!

The QWFF knows that Queens is a great destination for filmmakers and film lovers: two airports, scores of boutique hotels, neighborhoods like Jackson Heights that appreciate the global community, hundreds of great places to eat and residents that come from all over the world.

But most importantly ... there are 143 films, 23 nations, 6 days, 5 screens, 4 venues and you!



Katha Cato: Advertising the Queens World Film Festival during JHBG's Halloween Parade! The QWFF is just around the corner now.

Update on Battle for Landmarking Fairway Hall

By Lila M. Stromer

In the last issue of *Views from the Heights*, Melissa Gordon wrote about the possible landmarking of Fairway Hall, commonly referred to as "The Castle" because of its turrets (in need of repair) and Tudor-style slate roof. Designed by Joshua Tabatchnik and built in 1937, this building at 76-09 34th Ave. had been on the docket for possible landmarking since September 1990.

On February 23 of this year, DNAinfo New York reported that this building, as well as the Spanish Towers (on 75th St.), had been removed from consideration to make way for prioritizing decisions on other buildings still on the docket. These buildings may be re-added at a later date, but as of now, 26 years after the fact, they are no longer protected.



Fairway Hall



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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Jackson Heights Art Contest
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Jackson Heights:
A Garden in the City,
Jackson Heights:
From Ice Age to Space Age



Jackson Heights
Beautification Group
Founded in 1988
www.jhb.org
info@jhb.org

Membership Form for Jackson Heights Beautification Group

Your annual donation/membership in JHBG helps us fund neighborhood activities, demonstrates your commitment to a better community and permits us to be your voice in the revitalization of Jackson Heights. Your support is important to the future of our neighborhood. JHBG is 100 percent volunteer—there is no paid staff. JHBG is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and your contribution is tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to: Jackson Heights Beautification Group.

You will be mailed a receipt for tax purposes.

Please fill out this page and return it with your payment to:

JHBG — Membership
Box 720253
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

1. Please circle membership level

Individual—\$25

Business—\$50

Sustaining—\$100

Patron—\$250

Benefactor—\$500

Sponsor—\$1,000

Other _____

2. Please print the following:

Name: _____

Address (include apt. #): _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Optional: Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

3. Are you interested in being contacted about any of the following JHBG activities? If so, please circle the appropriate one(s).

Clean street

Friends of Travis Park

Garden Club (including flower planting)

Graffiti Busters

Halloween Parade

Newsletter and/or Website

Town Halls

Membership Building

Historic Weekend

Other: _____

4. Suggestions or Comments:

THANK YOU! If you have any questions or concerns, contact JHBG at 718-565-5344 or at info@jhbg.org.



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VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Mark Your Calendars

Queens World Film Festival March 15–20, 2016

See the cover article in this issue,
and check the QWFF website for more details

JHO Concert, March 16; see page 8

JHBG's Tree Stewardship Event, March 19; see page 2

JHBG's Gardening Planning Event, March 26; see page 2